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## ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

**CASE NUMBER:** C14H-06-0041

**HLC DATE:** November 27, 2006  
December 18, 2006  
October 22, 2007

**PC DATE:** November 13, 2007

**APPLICANT:** Historic Landmark Commission

**HISTORIC NAME:** Schenken-Oatman House

**WATERSHED:** Waller Creek

**ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE:** 311 West 41<sup>st</sup> Street

**ZONING FROM:** SF-3-NCCD

**TO:** SF-3-H-NCCD

**SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood conservation (SF -3-NCCD) district to Single Family – Historic – Neighborhood Conservation (SF-3-H-NCCD) combining district zoning.

**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION:** **November 27, 2006:** Initiated a historic zoning case. **December 18, 2006:** Postponed the case indefinitely at the request of the property owner, who is seeking to restore the house. **October 22, 2007:** Recommended a zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood conservation (SF-3-NCCD) district to single family residence – Historic, neighborhood conservation (SF-3-H-NCCD) combining district zoning. Vote: 6-0 (Bunton and Hansen absent; Leary ill).

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** Recommended a zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood conservation (SF-3-NCCD) district to single family residence – Historic, neighborhood conservation (SF-3-H-NCCD) combining district zoning. Vote: 9-0

**DEPARTMENT COMMENTS:** The house is a potentially contributing structure to the Hyde Park National Register Historic District, but requires the removal of non-historic architectural modifications to be contributing.

**CITY COUNCIL DATE:** December 6, 2007

**ACTION:**

**ORDINANCE READINGS:** 1<sup>ST</sup> 2<sup>ND</sup> 3<sup>RD</sup>

**ORDINANCE NUMBER:**

**CASE MANAGER:** Steve Sadowsky

**PHONE:** 974-6454

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION:** Hyde Park Neighborhood Association

**BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

**Architecture:** One-story hipped roof transitional cottage with a projecting entry porch. Alterations include aluminum siding and windows. The cottage is in poor condition having

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been vacant for at least 20 years. **UPDATE:** The aluminum siding has been removed, and the house has been leveled. Plans call for the complete restoration of the house.

**Historical Associations:** The dwelling was owned and occupied by Mrs. Pearl Oatman and daughter, from at least 1922. Mrs. Oatman was the widow of Harry W. Oatman who died in 1918. Mrs. Oatman died in 1973.

In 1968 ownership of the house was passed to Mrs. Oatman's daughter also named Pearl and son-in-law, William F. Welch. Pearl Welch continued to own the home until her death in 2005, although it is believed that she did not live in the home the later part of her life.

The new owners of the house, who are engaged in its restoration, have provided additional historical materials that show that this house is a "time capsule" of life in Hyde Park in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and an example of middle-class life in Austin.

**PARCEL NO.:** 02-1905-0907-0000

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** The east 65 feet of Lots 1-4, Block 6, Hyde Park, Addition No. 2

**ANNUAL CITY TAX ABATEMENT:** \$1,932.68 (Owner Occupied)

**APPRAISED VALUE:** \$181,095.00

**PRESENT USE:** Vacant

**CONDITION:** Poor

**PRESENT OWNER**

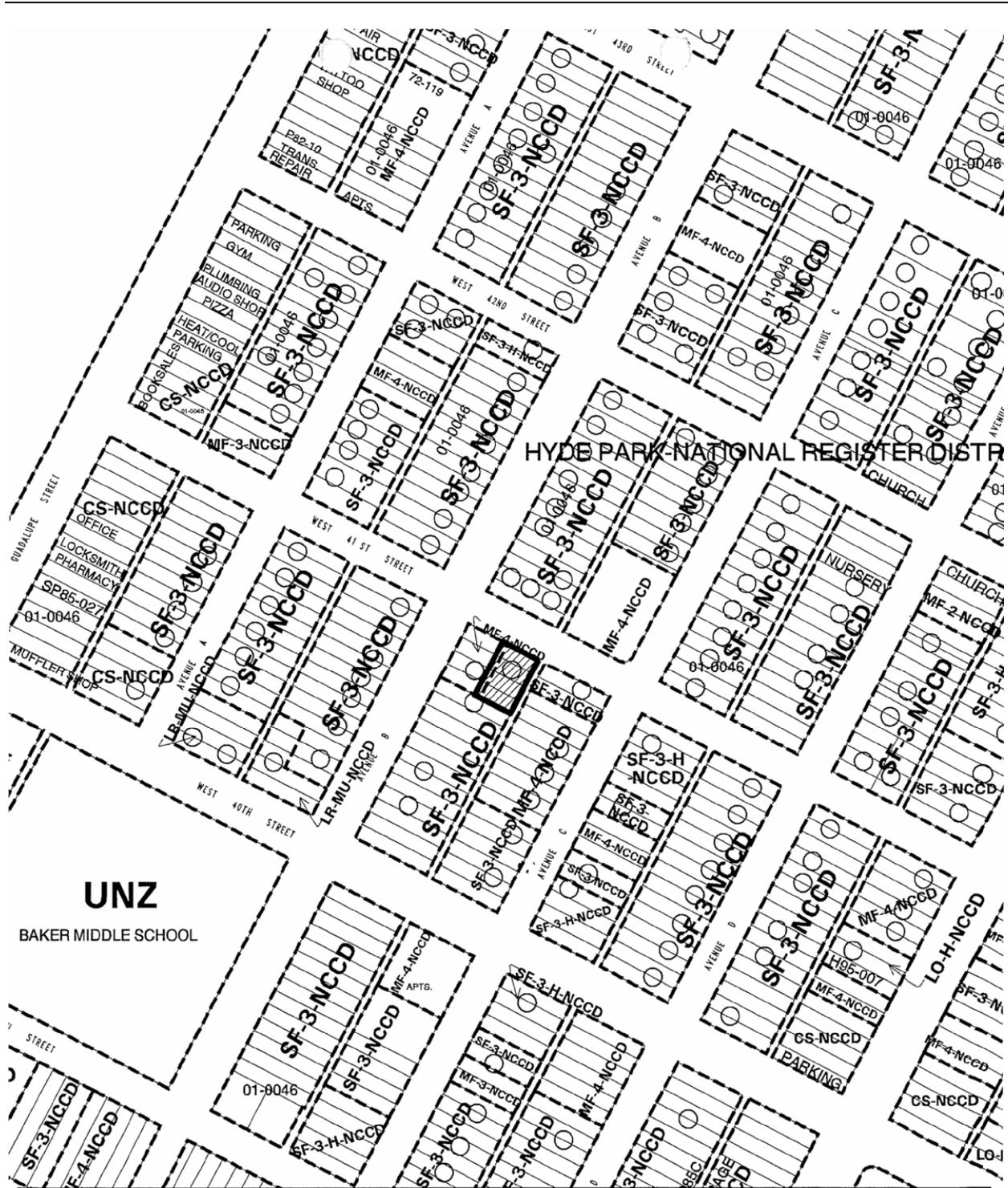
Restore Hyde Park, LLC  
c/o Wanda Penn  
3913 Avenue G  
Austin, Texas, 78751

**DATE BUILT:** 1911

**ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS:** Alterations include aluminum siding and replacement windows

**ORIGINAL OWNER(S):** Believed to be Adelbert F. Schenken

**OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS:** None



HYDE PARK NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT

**UNZ**  
BAKER MIDDLE SCHOOL

 1" = 200'	SUBJECT TRACT 	<b>NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT PERMIT</b>		CITY GRID REFERENCE NUMBER  J25	
	PENDING CASE 	CASE #: NRD-06-0159			
	ZONING BOUNDARY 	ADDRESS: 311 W 41ST ST			DATE: 06-11
	CASE MGR: S. SADOWSKY	SUBJECT AREA (acres): N/A			INTLS: SM



311 W. 41<sup>ST</sup> STREET – ORIGINAL SHIPLAP SIDING



311 W. 41<sup>ST</sup> STREET

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## OCCUPANCY HISTORY

City Directory Research, Austin History Center  
By City Historic Preservation Office  
November 8 and December 11, 2006

- 1976 William F. and Pearl O. Welch, Owners
- No occupation listed
- 1972 Pearl O. Welch, Owner
- Nurse
- 1968 William N. and Pearl O. Welch, Owners
- Attendant State Hospital
- 1965 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1961 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1958 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1955 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1952 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1947 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1944 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1941 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1937 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1935 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1929 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1927 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1924 Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed

- 
- 1922 \_\_\_\_\_ Pearl N. Oatman, Owner (Widow of Harry W.)
- No occupation listed
- 1920 \_\_\_\_\_ W A and Sallie Monts, Renters
- Inspector and Collector; Bobo-Heflin Co.
- 1918 \_\_\_\_\_ Lula Meacham (Widow of Murphy M)
- Saleswoman; E. M. Scarborough & Sons
- 1916 \_\_\_\_\_ Lula Meacham (Widow of Murphy M)
- Employee; F. W. Woolworth
- 1914 \_\_\_\_\_ William A. McElroy
- Bookkeeper
- 1912 \_\_\_\_\_ Adelbert F. Schenken
- Junior Apprentice Carpenter
- 1911 \_\_\_\_\_ Adelbert F. Schenken
- Printer Texas Vorwaerts

NOTE: 1909 City Directory shows Adelbert F. Schenken as living on Webberville Road (3 miles east of City Limits). It is believed that Mr. Schenken was the original owner of the house as there no listing for this property before 1911. One address is shown in the 1909 directory for John - Luthy residing at the S.W. corner of Avenue C and 41<sup>st</sup> Street listed as 300 W. 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

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## Architecture of 311 West 41st Street

The house, built in 1909-1910, documents the Transitional Period in American architecture, as well as in the architecture of Hyde Park. Monroe Ship first advertised Hyde Park in 1891-1892 as "the most Aristocratic area in Austin." By 1900, much smaller homes were being built for the middle and working classes. Scaling back Shippe's original vision, these houses, sometimes dubbed "folk Victorian," were the beginning of modern architecture in America.

The century-old house at 311 West 41st Street is a significant historical feature of Hyde Park and of the historic architectural inventory of Austin. It was not a contributing structure to the Hyde Park National Register District when it was formed as its siding was then covered with aluminum siding. That siding has now been removed to reveal completely in tact wood siding.

A 1970s photo at the Austin History Center shows that four wooden Tuscan columns support the roof of the front porch and are consistent with the medallions on the front porch fascia.

The hipped roof of patterned pressed metal shingles is a unique and rare survival and dates to the original construction of the house. One crockett detail survives at the central roof. The extended eaves of the house cause it to appear to float over the structure. Rehabilitation plans include retaining the original roof with a sprayed coating.

Windows on the east, west and rear have two-over-two window panes with original mullions, typical for 1880-1900, whereas the two front windows have single pens of glass typical of ca. 1900 and thereafter, perhaps a nod to modernity. Most of the originals window glass survives. Rehabilitation plans include restoration of the original windows and interior doors, which has been completed.

In the interior two different widths of beaded paneling survive, the wider width representing an earlier date, the narrower a post 1900 date.

The house is about 800 square feet with a central floor plan built for primary function. Well-proportioned rooms open off a central entry hall with high ceilings and elegant molding and trim.

The architecture of 311 West 41st Street can best be understood in the context of

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the German Texans who built and lived in the home. Adalbert and Mary Schenken were both born in Texas to German-born parents and lived their formative in the close German immigrant communities of DeWitt County, Texas. The largest group of non-Southern settlers in early Texas were immigrants from Germany, many of them liberals and socialists who had fled Central Europe after the failure of the Revolutions of 1848. A large concentration settled in the area north of San Antonio, and while they farmed their leisure time filled with singing clubs, scholarship, the composition of verse and even debates of the current issues in Latin, as well as in German and English. It was a society founded by surplus German noblemen, professors and professionals. Pioneer German feminists and journalists were honored social leaders.

Adalbert, the descendant of generations of prominent German lawyers and a Nobel prize-winning bacteriologist emerged from DeWitt County to attend Jacob Bickler's Texas-German Academy in Austin and left at the age of 14 to learn the printing trade under the tutelage of his stepfather Charles Buechner, a printer and editor of *Texas Vorwaerts*, the progressive German language newspaper. Although Adalbert and Mary were married and living together in 1893, the deed to the property lists only Mary Schenken as grantee.

It can be assumed that this progressive, free thinking German family was familiar with the current thought of the day in a time when Americans were first addressing the question of what a modern home should look like and reflecting on the Arts and Crafts movements in both England and America. Many of these German Texans settled in Hyde Park including Elisabet Ney, Fortunat Weigl and Peter Mansbendel at the time of the Schenkens' residence and were likely acquaintances. This coming together of German immigrant artist-intellectuals lead to the unique *Kunstwollen*, the will of an age to create, which had a profound effect on Hyde Park and Austin.

The late 19th and early 20th century posed an interesting question: now, in light of technology and the industrial revolution, what is modern architecture? In England, William Morris responded with a rejection of industrialism and the glorification of craft. Owen Jones's *Grammar of Ornament* prompted a study of primary forms through the comparison of historical ornament.

Across the Atlantic, Americans Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright used these theoretical developments as they helped establish the strong architectural tradition of Chicago. After the great Chicago fire, the exhibits of the Columbia Exposition of 1893 had a profound effect on the development of American

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architecture and Americans began to ask what an American home should look like. It had a great influence on Sullivan, which he interpreted through his new intuitive form of the skyscraper and extensive use of ornament. Wright, in turn, established a new form using these revolutionary ideas: the suburban home. It was also because of the Columbia Exposition that Hyde Park sculptor Elisabet Ney first came to Texas, as she had commissions for statues of Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston for the Texas Pavilion.

The Arts & Crafts in England and its American response both traveled to Germany. There, Hermann Muthesius translated such ideas into theory, *Das Englische Haus* (1904), and into practice in the establishment of the Deutsche Werkbund (1907). Perhaps this German reaction spurred the Schenkens' creation of the home at 311 W. 41st Street.

Certainly the home references the suburban developments in Chicago both in elevation and plan (Frank Lloyd Wright, Winslow Home, 1893-94, see Exhibit A attached) in the same way that Austin's skyscrapers (Littlefield Building, 1910, and Norwood Tower, 1929) quote Chicago's distinctive urban architecture (Louis Sullivan, Carson Pririe Scott Department Store, 1899).

Certainly in this exchange of ideas, which was transported in the interaction between Chicago, Germany and Austin's Hyde Park must have influenced the design of the home at 311 W. 41st Street. While we may only speculate over the Schenkens' motives in building this unique home, we can be certain of the home's place in the greater *Kunstwollen* of the 20th century. This home is certainly a part of the greater struggle to define the new modern form.

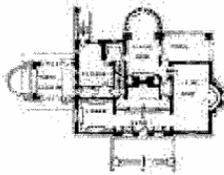
#### REFERENCES

- Lind, Michael. *Made in Texas*. New York: Basic Books, 2003.  
Jones, Joseph. *Life on Waller Creek*. Austin: AAR/Tantalus, 1982.  
Roth, Leland M. *American Architecture, A History*. Boulder, Westview Press, 2001.  
George, Mary Caroline and Eugene. Informal Paper of January 2007.  
Austin History Center, PICH 08222

Exhibit A.



Schenken-Oatman House, 1909-1910



Floor plan of Winslow House



Winslow House, River Forest , IL 1893-1894

Here - Please add these  
to the Seneca Oatmeal  
Home Packet. Thanks  
C. A. C.



Adalbert F. Schenken  
&  
Mary B. Gerloff

Wedding photo  
Oct. 18, 1893



313 - W. 41<sup>st</sup> St., Austin, after 1912  
Chicago, CA home 1924



On the Dairy Farm



Albert D., Ralph, Mary, Adalbert F.



with Byron



Rt. rear Mary, Adalbert F.

Front row  
Albert D.



AFE Mary's  
west side  
2/11



311 W. 41<sup>st</sup> St.

THE 2ND ANNUAL

# HYDE PARK HOMES TOUR



JUNE 16 - 17 2007

## The Schenken-Oatman House

311 W 41st Street

Owned by Restore Hyde Park, LLC

Nine years after its opening in 1891-92, Hyde Park was no longer advertised as “the most aristocratic area in Austin.” In response to the depressed economy, it was now portrayed as a development for the working and middle class. Property could be acquired for the same price as “two beers a day.” For the next several decades, Hyde Park’s architectural character changed and smaller frame houses were constructed. This represented a scaling back of Monroe Shipe’s original plan. More subdued in detailing than their high-style predecessors, often with pre-cut and assembled trim and details, these unassuming dwellings have been dubbed “Folk Victorian.” The next building boom in Hyde Park would occur between 1924 and 1935 when the bungalow was the stylistic idiom.

The first listing for this address can be found in the *Austin City Directory* for 1910: Adelbert F. Schenken was in residence. He was subsequently joined by his sons, Adelbert, Jr. and Ralph. Adelbert was a printer and



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worked for a weekly German language newspaper, *Texas Vorwaerts*. Because city directories represent a time lag of a year or two, the date of construction of the house can only be estimated as the first decade of the 20th century. Schenken paid off a note on this property in 1901, according to Travis County records.

The house, with its fortunate absence of remodeling and additions, is a time capsule that documents a period of transition between 1890 and 1910 in materials and technology, with regional variations. To cite one example: two widths of beaded paneling survive in the interior; the wider width represents an earlier date. The medallions ornamenting the eave fascia of the front porch are repeated in the trim of the historically-intact interior. Abundant clues exist to contribute to the restoration of this architectural treasure. An undated photograph in the Austin History Center (PICH 08222) shows the original wood siding as well as wooden Tuscan columns supporting the roof of the front porch, consistent with the medallions on the fascia. 311 West 41st Street is not a contributing structure to the Hyde Park National Register Historic District because it is currently clad in metal siding, but that is being rectified. The hipped

roof of pressed metal is a rare survival dating from the original construction of the house and has protected the house from major deterioration. One remaining crocket detail at the end of the central roof ridge bespeaks a striving for high style. The floor plan, with well-proportioned rooms opening off a central entry hall, includes features of earlier elegant interiors with high ceilings. The dignified presence of the house may derive from Adelbert Schenken’s cultural background. Imminent artist, artisans and intellectuals of German heritage were numbered among his Hyde Park neighbors.

With the advent of World War I, the newspaper where Adelbert had been employed ceased publication, presumably due to anti-German sentiment, and census records track his move to central California. He briefly returned to 41st Street in 1918 to arrange for the disposition of his holdings. By 1922, Pearl N. Oatman had purchased 311 West 41st Street and she lived there until her death in 1973. Her daughter, Pearl Oatman Welch, who inherited the property, was in residence there until 1985, when she moved to Bertram. She retained ownership of the house, which stood vacant until the present.

Why do the Schenken-Oatman house and the Curl-Crockett house face 41st Street rather than a lettered avenue? Research has

### Post Oak Survivors

Two more post oaks survive on the grounds of the first house on the tour. The time-capsule nature of this surviving turn of the century home is reflected in the two mature, healthy post oaks on its grounds. Growth rings of a dead post oak recently removed from the same yard indicate that these trees are about the same age as the house itself, probably volunteers chosen to be saved by its earliest residents in the early 1900s. Members of the Austin Historical Landmark Commission cited the presence of these trees in their support for preserving the structure.

revealed that, in the early years of Hyde Park, these properties faced a large green open space. In Shipe’s original scheme, this was to be the site of Gem Lake and Crystal Fountain. Although this undivided tract was subdivided in 1903, most of the houses on these blocks were not constructed until the 1920s.

At the December 2006 session of the Historic Landmark Commission, consideration of

the demolition permit sought by the executor of the estate of Pearl Oatman Welch and recommended by Historic Landmark Commission staff was postponed for sixty days while advocates for restoration devised a plan for heroic rescue. In a stunning example of the Hyde Park spirit, eleven contributors pledged capital in sums ranging from \$50,000 to \$10,000 to purchase, restore and resell the house, with the understanding that the project may not produce a profit. While preserving the historic fabric, the result will be a comfortable 21st century, owner-occupied residence. A rare example of the egalitarian second phase of Hyde Park development has been saved to continue as a significant historical feature of the neighborhood and of Austin.

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source, ...

Dear Catherine,  
In this note I can provide  
few more facts -

Adalbert F. Schenker (as spelled on  
wedding announce-  
ment)

and  
Mary G. Beckett  
were married Saturday Oct. 18 at  
the Episcopal Church in  
Cairo, Egypt

I hope to be soon sending you a  
copy of the wedding photo. It  
is my hope that the photo will  
imagine you and others in your  
group, and that one day it can  
hang in the renovated home. I  
am so happy you have saved  
the home.  
My sister lives in Canton, OK and

I have told her that one day I  
hope to fly to her home so we  
can drive down to see the house.  
Probably when the home is finished,  
or for a possible dedication of  
its historical designation.

When Adalbert's father disappeared  
in 1868 on his way to Shinyou, his  
wife, Mary Louise Thielpage Schenker  
was for about 5 years a widow. In  
1873 she married C. G. Beechner.  
Their 4 children were:

- Etta Beechner — married Vincent
  - Belle Beechner — Praylor
  - Conrad Beechner
  - Ernie Beechner
  - Adalbert's mother, Mary Louise Thielpage  
Schenker Beechner died at Austin TX  
on Aug 29, 1913
- I realize that you are happy to have

Notes from Emma Mueller (nee Schenker) of Osgo

the information I can send to you, but perhaps not as happy as I am to see your research in Austin. I really know very little about their life there.

I did not know Buechner was a printer, or that Adalbert worked at the printing trade. The Hyde Park term is new to me. I will have to check on the reference to Fresno, as that is not something I remember. I have an idea! I would like to continue to receive the Austin period info. if you will send it. I can patch it together with the photos and information I already have.

It will then be my goal to prepare a booklet, or possibly many pages spiral-bound, about the family that lived at Hyde Park.

It will take some time. I hope it will be done when house restoration is complete. I know it is doable because I have prepared genealogy binders with photos for many members of my family.

My previous "publications" all have labels and comments done by hand, so I will have to improve my computer skills, as you will note from my

previous message.

Just an aside - 2 brothers came to America -

my ancestor  
Carl George Ludwig C.A. Schenken

Rudy's ancestor  
Rudolph Julius Schenke

↓  
Adalbert F. Schenken

↓  
Ralph W<sup>son</sup> Dudley Karl Schenken - 1894

↓  
Donna Elaine Schenken Kuechler  
I have 1 sister, married, and  
2 brothers who carry the  
Schenken name. Only  
1 brother has a son

Ralph's brother, Albert  
Daniel Schenken,  
had 3 sons, only 1  
of whom is  
living

My father was born in 1894. You  
might think I am dreadfully  
old! However, he was 40 when  
I was born. So I will be 73  
in November. Well, maybe that  
is old, but not as old as it  
could have been. (20)

Tomorrow I will see about copying the wedding  
photo. Thank you for all you are doing.  
Best Wishes, Donna

I'm sorry I  
can't put my  
hands on Rudy's  
tree at the  
moment. I have  
it somewhere.

But, as you  
can see, he is  
somewhat  
removed from  
Adalbert.  
Still how lucky  
we are to have  
all these  
marvelous  
records.

C144-06-0041  
Pearl Oatman House

**Hyde Park Neighborhood Association**

P.O. Box 49427 • Austin, TX 78765 • [www.austinhypark.org](http://www.austinhypark.org)

October 11, 2007

Historic Landmark Commission  
City of Austin  
Box 1088  
Austin, TX 78767

Dear Commission Members:

On October 9, 2007, the Steering Committee of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association (HPNA) voted to support Historic Zoning for the house at 311 West 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

The house is currently being restored and has significant architectural features as well as ties to persons who were significant in the history of Hyde Park and the City of Austin.

HPNA will appreciate your careful consideration of this house and we hope you will join us in preserving this property for the future.

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Austin.

Sincerely,

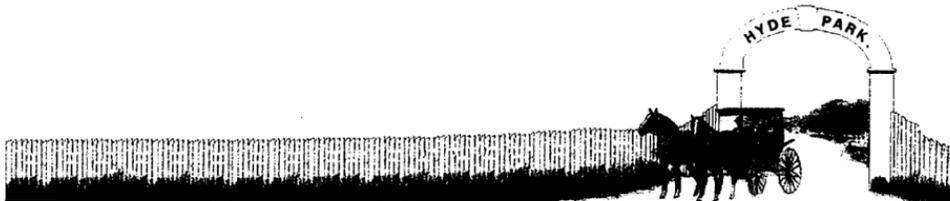


Elaine Meenehan  
President  
Hyde Park Neighborhood Association

RECEIVED

OCT 18 2007 ✓

NPZD/CHPO



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Dear Ms. Wilson,

We have sent a copy of this letter to Mr. Sadowsky, Ms. Limbacher and Ms. Bunton as you indicated yesterday. I am sending this to you too so you would have this information.

Historic Case #NRD-06-0159 to be heard at public hearing on November 27th, 2006

We are protesting the demolition permit request for the home located at 311 W. 41st St in the Hyde Park neighborhood.

We do not believe that the structure should be destroyed and ask that the demolition permit be denied. We have lived by this property for over 50 years and knew both Mrs. Oatman and her daughter Mrs. Welch who each maintained this home. It is very apparent that this property needs some major renovations due to its subsequent closure and vacancy during Mrs. Welch's final years; however it does not need to be torn down. We believe that City Staff should conduct extensive research and investigation of the historic nature of this property to both the Hyde Park neighborhood as well as the history of the City of Austin and Travis County before any further action is taken on the future of this structure.

This home appears on the City's tax rolls back to 1912, however, due to the number of older residents who once lived around this property and who are now deceased, they related stories to us of how this structure may have actually dated back prior to 1900. It was also stated by these neighbors that the primary structure beneath the green metal siding and older wood siding was once a log cabin with a "dog trot or run" that is actually the central hall leading from the front door to the rear of the home. We lived here many years before the green siding was installed and saw the older type of wooden siding that made up the exterior walls. Also, in the back southwest corner of the property sits a small "cow" barn that dates back to the early 1900's and was once part of the surrounding pastureland that cattle were raised on. Whether or not the home was moved to this location from another part of the city or county or actually site built on it's present location would still mean that this home may actually be one of the oldest homes and structures in the central part of Hyde Park.

The house was recently offered for sale by the executor of the estate for a minimum bid of \$200,000.00 and evidently did not sell or have any qualified takers. Certainly with the number of real estate agents and brokers within the City of Austin and the MLS system that they use, the executor could engage them to assist in finding a buyer interested in preserving this historic piece of Hyde Park. Even if the buyer would be willing to relocate this structure to another part of the neighborhood, it would be more pleasing than to see it bulldozed down and permanently destroyed. (This was done over 25 years ago with the Woodburn Home which in worse shape but was successfully moved from the W. 40th and Avenue F. corner to it's present location on Avenue D.)

This home has been a significant part of the Hyde Park neighborhood and deserves a fitting future as someone's home, rather than a pile of rubble with another cookie cutter home placed on its lot. The character and architectural charm of this structure needs to be preserved for the neighborhood's future and as part of Austin's history.

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My family and I would respectfully request that you deny the demolition permit at this time and request that research be done on this old home's historic past to develop it's historic significance for Hyde Park. Please research all of the options before deciding on demolition.

Due to my present health, I am unable to travel to attend hearings on this case. However, I wanted this information to be made available to you prior to the hearing date.

Sincerely,

Mrs. N. Boatright  
4008 Avenue C  
Austin, TX

---

W. Eugene George FAIA  
Post Office Box 4426  
Austin, TX 78765  
(512) 467-9407  
[georgeplusgeorge@pop.net](mailto:georgeplusgeorge@pop.net)

Steve Sadowsky  
Historic Preservation Office  
P.O. Box 1088  
Austin Texas 78767

The purpose of this letter is to contribute information about a house in the Hyde Park neighborhood for which a demolition permit has been requested :

The century-old house at 311 West 41<sup>st</sup> Street is a significant historical feature of Hyde Park and to the historic architectural inventory of Austin. It is not listed as a contributing structure to the Hyde Park National Register of Historic Places because it is clad in vinyl siding but that is easily rectified. The recent restoration of the von Boeckmann-Keeble House at 4410 Avenue H — formerly clad in vinyl and recipient of the Heritage Society of Austin award in 2005—is a case-in-point.

311 West 41<sup>st</sup> Street is centrally located between two exemplary restorations nearby : the Curl-Crockett House at 213 West 41<sup>st</sup> Street and the house on the northwest corner of 41<sup>st</sup> Street and Avenue B.

**DATING** The date established by the Preservation Office staff of 1912 is clearly in error. The Austin City Directory for 1910-11 lists Adelbert F. Schenken, a printer with Texas Vorwaerts, in residence there, then subsequently with his sons, Adelbert, Jr. and Ralph. Research before that date in City Directories is problematic because (1) organization by names of residents, not by address and (2) before 1907, 38<sup>th</sup> Street in Hyde Park was called 1<sup>st</sup> Street, 39<sup>th</sup>= 2<sup>nd</sup> and so on. In addition, Sanborn's Fire Insurance maps did not include Hyde Park until 1922.

**PHYSICAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS A PROBABLE DATE BEFORE 1900**

(a) Windows on the east and west sides have 2 over 2 window panes with original mullions —typical for 1880 – 1900. In the front windows, mullions were removed when single panes of glass were later installed. The dimensions of these windows is standard for the 1890-1900 period.

(2) The hipped roof of pressed metal is a unique and rare survival and dates from the original construction of the house. One original crockett detail at the end of the central roof ridge bespeaks a striving for elegance. The roof is probably of iron which does not deteriorate [ superior to steel which does ]. The roof has saved the house from major deterioration.

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Page Two

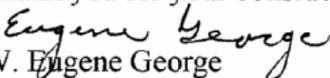
- (3) The medallions ornamenting the eave fascia of the front porch are repeated in the trim of the historically-intact interior ( door frames, etc. ) which dates from the original construction.
- (4) Two small brick chimneys served wood-burning cast-iron stoves , one for a cooking stove in the kitchen.
- (5) There are several ancient post oak trees in the back yard.

#### RESTORATION OF AN ARCHITECTURAL TREASURE

Abundant clues will contribute to the authentic restoration of the house –enhanced by the absence of remodeling and/or additions. 311 West 41<sup>st</sup> Street is built of better materials and of substantially better construction that what was going up in the 1920s.

With a floor plan with rooms opening off a central entry hall...once elegant interiors with high ceilings...this is a landmark awaiting a new life. A photograph in the Austin History Center ( PICH 0822 ) of 311 West 41<sup>st</sup> Street ca. 1950s shows the original wood siding as well as four wooden Tuscan columns supporting the roof of the front porch, consistent with the medallions on the fascia.

Thank you for your consideration.

  
W. Eugene George